

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-20 NIC-01

DRC-01 STR-08 /208 W

----- 024436

R 172112Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0924

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY ROME

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DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EEC, ECON, PINT, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH FARMER UNREST

SUMMARY: FRUSTRATED BY DECLINING PRICES, PROSPECTS FOR REDUCED INCOME, AND LACK OF GOVERNMENT ACTION, FRENCH BEEF AND PORK PRODUCERS HAVE ERUPTED IN DEMONSTRATIONS OF SOMETIMES VIOLENT CHARACTER. PURPOSE IS TO EXERT PRESSURE ON GOF TO EFFECT RELIEF MEASURES. SEPTTEL FOLLOWS ON FRENCH AGMIN PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 17 WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMENTS ON POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR US.

1. IN LATEST CHAPTER OF FARMER DISCONTENT, FRANCE WITNESSED SERIES OF AGGRESSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WHICH BEGAN JULY 10 AND PEAKED ON JULY 15. DEMONSTRATIONS WERE CHARACTERIZED BY DESTRUCTION OF FOOD IMPORTS (ARGENTINE BEEF; BELGIAN AND DANISH PIGS), BRUTALITY, AND A TOUCH OF THE BIZARRE (PIGLETS WERE HUNG FROM LAMPOSTS IN LORIENT).

2. CURRENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE PRECEDED BY THOSE OF BRETON ARTICHOKE PRODUCERS IN LATE JUNE AND PROVENÇAL FRUIT PRODUCERS IN EARLY JULY WHO WERE REWARDED WITH GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE; AND SUPPRESSION OF PEACH IMPORTS FROM SPAIN, RESPECTIVELY.

3. PEAK OF CURRENT DEMONSTRATIONS COINCIDED WITH EC AGRICULTURE MEETING IN BRUSSELS AND WAS PROBABLY TIMED TO SPUR FRENCH OFFICIALS THERE TO PUSH FOR SUBSTANTIAL RELIEF FOR EC MEAT PRODUCERS. FRENCH AGRICULTURE MINISTER IS SCHEDULED TO GIVE PRESS CONFERENCE THIS AFTERNOON (SEPTER WILL FOLLOW) IN WHICH HE IS EXPECTED TO REPORT RESULTS OF COUNCIL MEETING AND ANNOUNCE DETAILS OF GOV MEASURES TO PLACATE FARMERS.

4. WIDESPREAD FARMER DISSATISFACTION IS ROOTED IN BELIEF FARM INCOME WILL VERY LIKELY DECREASE 17 PERCENT IN 1974. DECREASED REVENUE IS DUE TO INCREASED COST OF FARM INPUTS AND LOWER PRICES FOR OUTPUT. FOOD PRICES AT RETAIL LEVEL, HOWEVER, HAVE CONTINUED TO INCREASE. MANY FARM PRODUCERS THEREFORE FEEL THEY ARE CAUGHT IN SQUEEZE AND ARE LOSING THEIR INCOME PARITY WITH OTHER CATEGORIES OF FRENCHMEN. THIS SENTIMENT IS EXACERBATED BY FACT THAT PRESIDENT GISCARD DURING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN GAVE ASSURANCES FARM INTERESTS WOULD BE DEFENDED.

5. ALTHOUGH FRUIT GROWERS AND WINE PRODUCERS HAVE RECENTLY SUFFERED DECLINE IN REVENUE (AND HAVE BEEN AFFORDED VARYING DEGREES OF RELIEF BY GOV), IT IS THE MEAT PRODUCERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY MOST AFFECTED. FRENCH

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RED MEAT STOCKS ARE EXTREMELY HIGH (MORE THAN 50,000 TONS), AND FALL IN PRICE OF RED MEAT AND PORK AT FARM LEVEL, ESTIMATED AT 15 TO 25 PERCENT, HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS CATASTROPHIC BY FARM LOBBYISTS. THEIR CURRENT PLIGHT PLUS LACK OF GOVERNMENT RELIEF EXPLAINS CURRENT, SOMETIMES, VIOLENT, DEMONSTRATIONS LED BY MEAT AND HOG PRODUCERS IN WEST AND NORTHERN FRANCE.

6. PRINCIPAL FARM ORGANIZATIONS FNSEA AND CNJA, WHILE NOT STAGING DEMONSTRATIONS AT NATIONAL LEVEL, HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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NOT DISAVOWED LOCAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND HAVE, IN FACT,

ALLOWED LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN CURRENT
PERTURBATIONS. VICE PRESIDENT OF FNSEA RECENTLY
DECLARED FARM PRESSURE WILL CONTINUE UNTIL FARMERS
RECEIVE ASSURANCES THEIR INCOME WILL BE MAINTAINED.
MODEF, FARM ORGANIZATION CLOSE TO COMMUNIST PARTY, ALSO
APPEARS TO BE ENCOURAGING THE DEMONSTRATIONS. WHILE
ACTUAL NUMBER OF FARMERS ACTIVE IN CURRENT PROTESTS IS
NOT LARGE, THEY APPEAR TO REPRESENT CONSENSUS OF FARM
SECTOR. BACKING OF FRENCH BODY POLITIC APPEARS ALSO TO
BE WIDESREAD WITH NUMBER OF POLITICIANS URGING RELIEF
MEASURES.

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TAGS: EAGR, ECON, PINT, FR, EEC, FNSEA, CNJA
To: STATE
Type: TE
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